REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are all the claims pending in the application. Applicants add claim 5 to further define the invention as explained in detail below.

The Examiner has indicated that none of the certified copies of the Priority Document have been received. However, the certified copy of the Priority Document was filed on February 17, 2004. Furthermore, according to the USPTO PAIR Website, in the Image File Wrapper for the present application, the Foreign Priority Papers were received by the USPTO on February 17, 2004. For the Examiner's convenience, Applicants file herewith a copy of the face of the Priority Document and copy of the OIPE date-stamped filing for February 17, 2004 receipt with the response. Acknowledgement of the priority is requested from the Examiner in the next Office paper.

The Examiner has not indicated approval of the drawings filed on February 17, 2004 in response to the Notice to File Corrected Application Papers mailed December 30, 2003. Applicants respectfully request approval of the drawings in the next Office paper.

The specification is objected to by the Examiner because of informalities. Applicants amend the specification to remove any ambiguities.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Noda (4,427,162).

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takikura (6,394,380) in view of Bowers (3,808,906).

Analysis

The present invention is directed to using an elastic member in order to exhibit different effects for the power transmission mechanism of a fishing reel. The elastic member is provided with a power transmitting instrument for facilitating transmission of power from a rotating handle to a rotor.

This feature is illustrated in Figs. 3 and 5-8, for example. The elastic can be disposed so that the gear portions 10a, 12b do not contact under a low load, but under a high load, the elastic member slides to generate a force to urge the gear portions to contact. But under this high load, the elastic member prevents vibration or bad rotation which would otherwise be caused by the meshing of the gears in a high load scenario. In other embodiments (Fig. 6 and 8) the elastic member is made larger or smaller than the gear diameter, thus also affecting whether the gears mesh.

With respect to claim 1, Noda also discloses an elastic element, disposed around the shaft 3 and the association shaft 22. However, in Noda, the use of the rubber rollers is alternative to the meshing gears of the first and second drive coupling means. In other words, Noda teaches that rubber rollers can be used instead of the mesh gears, but there is no teaching or suggestion to use them together. Thus, the advantages of the present invention are lost with this reference.

In view of the foregoing, claim 1 is patentable.

Claim 2 should be patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1, by virtue of its dependency therefrom.

With respect to claim 3, Bowers discloses the use of an elastic member in conjunction with the gears. However, the elastic member is disposed in the tooth spaces of each of the gears

as block-like inserts 30.[1] This is a completely different structure than the present invention in which the elastic member is an annular ring shape.[2] Due to this different structure of the elastic member, in contrast to Bowers, it is not disposed in the tooth spaces. As noted in claim 3, it is coaxial with the second gear.

The structure of the elastic member is important in the present invention because it allows for different effects to be exhibited by forming the locus in the friction face to the friction transmission rotating part to be identical or different with respect to a pitch diameter R of the gear (see page 10). It is also easy to assemble since the elastic member is merely attached so as to adjoin the gear portion of the gear (see page 12).

In view of the foregoing, claim 3 is patentable.

Claim 4 depends from claim 3 and should be patentable for at least the same reasons by virtue of its dependency therefrom.

Finally, Applicants add claim 5 to further define the invention. Claim 5 is directed to the elastic member being attached to one of the first and second gears so as to prevent the first and second gears from contacting under a low load condition. Claim 5 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 3, by virtue of its dependency therefrom.

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[1] Col. 2, lines 12-55.

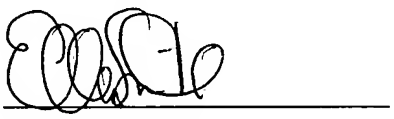
[2] See Specification at page 10 ("...having uniform thickness allover outer circumference") and Figs. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 10.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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